

INFOVIDA - A Health Information Server in the WWW

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Introduction. The growing usage of the Internet in the academic and commercial arena has impelled the development of new access tools and availability of information¹. The Internet has made a revolution with the bibliographical research and the qualified actualization done for fast and organized access to facts in any human knowledge area. The Internet became the most promising tool for obtaining health information, because it's not only very extensive but also decentralized^{2,3}. So the Internet opens perspectives to the health professional and besides facilitating the users access to the health services. Health servers in World Wide Web (WWW) had grown surprisingly. However the multiplicity of the news sources and the lack of a macro organization in the availability of information are making the search for skilled advice be longer and more complex. The Infovida purpose is to supply this deficiency through the development of a server of knowledge tone in the World Wide Web in Pernambuco (Brazil) for public use and professional actualization. The Infovida project is mainly concerned with: 1) consolidating a model of electronic provision of information in health sciences that reaches also the rural areas; 2) Improving and developing the relationship among health professionals and between them and society; 3) Making accessible an intelligent search mechanism for specific topics.

Methods. A repository was made organizing the information into four categories: i) relative to the government (epidemiological data and public services); ii) professionals, relative to the entities and the people that provides essential services to the population; iii) educational and research, relative to the providers of information that contribute to the professional academic evolution; iv) and technological support. Through the server the user has initially the following services: information about entities, services and professionals; access to health information bases; electronic mail; discussion lists; and the specialized search mechanism. The visualization model of the information is hierarchical: neighborhood, region, city, state, etc. So the user will be able to know what can be solved

in the medical area where he is. The maintenance of the data base takes place in a distributed way. The partners involved are responsible for their own informations in the repository. However, the project is coordinated by a committee that covers three entities and that share the responsibility in the organization and classification of information, the basic infrastructure for telecommunications and computer technology in to supporting and planning possible partners in the net. This entities are: LIKA/UFPE, Secretaria de Saúde do Estado (SES-PE), Rede Nacional de Pesquisa (RNP/CR-Recife).

Results. A first version was released in the net (<http://www.na-rc.rnp.br/infovida>) in September 1996. The constant evolution of the server intend to consolidate the model of information provision and its expansion to other states of Brazil. This project intends to build an information service that induces the enrollment of some health key institutions through the Internet. Thus, in the future, we hope to improve the public health attendance, generally through the development of medical data communications protocols and other services offered by the telemedicine. The use of such services, as teleconsult or tediagnosis, would collaborate with the growth of the net and provide better health services to the community as a whole.

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References

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